



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Fleet Forces Cancels Sortie Condition Alpha

From U.S. Fleet Forces Public Affairs

NORFOLK - Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces has modified guidance for all U.S. Navy ships in Hampton Roads, Va. Ships currently in port have been directed to remain in port. Ships at sea continue to maneuver to clear the path of the storm.

The Navy orders a sortie during potentially extreme weather conditions to reduce the risk of significant damage to ships and piers during high winds and seas. Ships planned to get underway on Saturday will no longer go to sea because the projected winds and storm surge in the Navy's ports in Hampton Roads will not exceed the ability of our ships to remain safely in port.

"We kept a very close watch on the storm all night," said Adm. Bill Gortney, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command. "As a result of these projected changes, we determined that the safest place for the ships not already underway is in port. While we have made these prudent decisions for our ships, I don't want to understate the significance of the situation. Sandy remains a powerful storm."

Ships in port will take extra precautions to avoid potential damage from this powerful storm. Commanding officers have a number of options when staying in port, depending on the severity of the weather. Standard measures for ships riding out heavy weather in port include extra mooring lines; placing the anchor on the bottom while alongside the pier; and removal of shore power cables, heavy or elevated brows, and any lighter objects that could create hazards during high winds.

As a precautionary measure, Commander Navy Installations Command ordered all installations in the Hampton Roads area to remain at Tropical Cyclone Condition Three as Sandy is forecast to bring high winds and rain to the Mid-Atlantic coast. Tropical Cyclone Condition Three means destructive winds of greater than 50 knots associated with a tropical system, are expected within 48 hours.

Additional measures taken by local Navy commands included pulling dozens of small craft out of the water at various locations around Hampton Roads. These vessels will remain out of the water until after the storm passes.

"It is important for all of our Sailors, civilians, and family members take all appropriate precautions as the storm approaches, and I would encourage the general public to do the same,"

said Gortney. "I'm a boat owner, and mine is out of the water and I am using a checklist to make sure my family and I are ready for the potential impacts of Sandy here in the Hampton Roads area."

A variety of information is available in support of family readiness during hurricane season including:

- Marine Safety Information Bulletins. See "News and Events" at:
<http://homeport.uscg.mil/mycg/portal/ep/portDirectory.do?tabId=1&cotpId=26>
- Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System, <http://go.usa.gov/kQ4>, which provides a standardized method for the Navy to account, manage and monitor the recovery process for personnel and their families affected and/or scattered by a wide-spread catastrophic event.
- U.S. Fleet Forces planning preparedness Web site to help families with hurricane and destructive weather planning http://www.public.navy.mil/usff/Pages/disaster_preparedness.aspx.
- State of Virginia Emergency Management, <http://www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia>, which has many resources for planning and preparing emergency kits, developing evacuation plans and addressing specific special needs for children, the elderly and others.
- Virginia Department of Transportation Hurricane Evacuation Guide, http://www.virginiadot.org/travel/hurricane_defauLT.asp, which provides more detailed information for preparing for a hurricane, hurricane evacuation and public shelters in Virginia.
- Red Cross Hurricane Preparedness Guide, <http://www.seva-redcross.org/preparehr/index2.html>, which provides general overview of tips and guidelines for hurricane preparedness.

Note: Media desiring more information about this event should contact the USFF Public Affairs Office at 757-836-4421.

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